



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
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July 17, 2008

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TO: SACHI A. HAMAI
Executive Officer
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Attention: Robin Guerrero
Deputy Executive Officer
Board Operations

FROM: JOHN F. KRATTLI 
Senior Assistant County Counsel

RE: **Ronald Verdekkel, et al. v. County of Los Angeles**
U.S. District Court Case No. CV 06-01518 JFW

Attached is the Agenda entry for the Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation in the above-referenced matter.

It is requested that this recommendation, the Case Summary, and the Summary Corrective Action Plans be placed on the Board of Supervisors' agenda for July 29, 2008.

JFK:rfm

Attachments

Board Agenda

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation: Authorize settlement of the matter entitled Ronald Verdekel, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, U.S. District Court Case No. CV 06-01518 JFW, in the amount of \$595,000 and instruct the Auditor-Controller to draw a warrant to implement this settlement from the budgets of the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Health Services, with each department contributing equally to the settlement.

This wrongful death lawsuit arises from medical treatment provided at the Los Angeles County Jail and LAC+USC Medical Center.

CASE SUMMARY

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF LITIGATION

CASE NAME	Ronald Verdekel, Estate of Heidi Verdekel, et al. v. County of Los Angeles
CASE NUMBER	CV 06-01518 JFW
COURT	U.S. District Court
DATE FILED	March 10, 2006
COUNTY DEPARTMENT	Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AMOUNT	\$595,000.00
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF	Sonia Mercado, Esq.
COUNTY COUNSEL ATTORNEY	Narbeh Bagdasarian Deputy County Counsel (213) 974-1864
NATURE OF CASE	<p>This is a civil lawsuit brought by Ronald Verdekel, Laura Nielson, and the Estate of Heidi Verdekel, for the death of their 29-year-old daughter, Heidi Verdekel, who died on March 14, 2005.</p> <p>Ms. Verdekel, who had a long history of epileptic seizures, was arrested and taken into the custody of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. She was placed at Twin Towers.</p>

While at the Twin Towers, she was evaluated and was placed on an anti-seizure medication. Ms. Verdekel, however, suffered from epileptic seizures and was subsequently transferred to LAC+USC Medical Center.

While at LAC+USC Medical Center, Ms. Verdekel's medical condition was complicated with infection. She died on March 14, 2005 at LAC+USC Medical Center.

Although the County will assert that the proper medical treatment was provided to Ms. Verdekel, the plaintiffs will argue that Ms. Verdekel's medical condition was not appropriately managed while she was under care of the County of Los Angeles. Thus, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department agreed to propose a settlement of this case in the amount of \$595,000.00. Specifically, the plaintiffs allege a violation of Ms. Verdekel's civil rights in that Sheriff personnel were deliberately indifferent to Ms. Verdekel's medical condition, by failing to monitor and treat her seizure condition, failing to provide her with proper and sufficient medications, and failing to transfer her to LAC+USC sooner.

PAID ATTORNEY FEES, TO DATE	\$251,900.00
PAID COSTS, TO DATE	\$70,860.00

Summary Corrective Action Plan



The intent of this form is to assist departments in writing a corrective action plan summary for attachment to the settlement documents developed for the Board of Supervisors and/or the County of Los Angeles Claims Board. The summary should be a specific overview of the claims/lawsuits' identified root causes and corrective actions (status, time frame, and responsible party). This summary does not replace the Corrective Action Plan form. If there is a question related to confidentiality, please consult County Counsel.

Date of incident/event:	March 14, 2005 In custody death
Briefly provide a description of the incident/event:	Medical papers from a board and care facility were not received at the time the patient was evaluated by a physician upon intake into the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department facility.

1. Briefly describe the root cause of the claim/lawsuit:

This patient did not receive the same medication or dosage that she had been taking prior to incarceration as information was not received upon intake on February 23, 2005. On February 24, 2005, she developed seizures and was sent to LAC + USC Medical Center where she remained until her death on March 14, 2005.

County of Los Angeles
Summary Corrective Action Plan



2. Briefly describe recommended corrective actions:
(Include each corrective action, due date, responsible party, and any disciplinary actions if appropriate)

In December 2007, a Medical Services policy was revised to define the processing of medical information from the booking process.

In December 2007, the screening form used during the booking process was modified to identify those patients who arrive from medical care facilities.

3. State if the corrective actions are applicable to only your department or other County departments:
(If unsure, please contact the Chief Executive Office Risk Management Branch for assistance)

- ☐ Potentially has County-wide implications.
- ☐ Potentially has implications to other departments (i.e., all human services, all safety departments, or one or more other departments).
- X Does not appear to have County-wide or other department implications.

Signature: (Risk Management Coordinator) 	Date: 02-25-08
Signature: (Department Head) 	Date: 3-3-08



Summary Corrective Action Plan

Date of incident/event:	March 14, 2005
Briefly provide a description of the incident/event:	Heidi Verdekel was brought to LAC+USC from LASD on February 24, 2005, for treatment and evaluation of seizures. Efforts were made to control her seizures but she eventually required transfer to the ICU where she was intubated and a central venous catheter was placed. Despite medication, she continued to have seizures, but she eventually improved. However, she developed symptoms consistent with sepsis and despite aggressive treatment, Ms. Verdekel died on March 14, 2005.

1. Briefly describe the root cause of the claim/lawsuit:

- Failure to manage the inmate's/patient's medical condition.

2. Briefly describe recommended corrective actions:
(Include each corrective action, due date, responsible party, and any disciplinary actions if appropriate)

- On 6/21/05, 1/31/07 and 10/31/07 education was provided on the definition, mortality, systemic effects and treatment of patients in status epilepticus.
- On 5/22/07, 5/24/07 and 11/13/07 education was provided on "Surviving Sepsis, Getting to Goals".
- In September 2007 education was provided on the management of central venous catheters.
- On 12/31/07 a Failure Mode Effect Analysis Process Team completed a facility wide project to reduce central line infections using the following measures: hand hygiene, maximum sterile barrier, chlorhexidine skin antisepsis, optimal catheter site selection and daily review of central line site.




3. State if the corrective actions are applicable to only your department or other County departments:
(If unsure, please contact the Chief Executive Office Risk Management Branch for assistance)

☐ Potentially has County-wide implications.

X Potentially has implications to other departments (i.e., all human services, all safety departments, or one or more other departments).

☐ Does not appear to have County-wide or other department implications.

County of Los Angeles
Summary Corrective Action Plan

Signature: (Risk Management Coordinator) 	Date: 6/26/08
Signature: (Senior Medical Director) 	Date: 7/3/08
Signature: (Department Head) 	Date: 7-3-08

Document version: 2.0 (October 2007)

CONFIDENTIAL : The information contained in this document is privileged and strictly confidential under State Law, including Evidence Code Section 1157 relating to medical professional peer review documents and Government Code section 6254c relating to personnel records